

CLAIMS

The invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed is defined as follows:

1. A hand-held device for gripping objects positioned beyond arm's length, comprising:
at least a first pair of jaws movable relative to each other between at least an unclamped
and at least a first clamped position thereof;

a handle spaced apart from said at least first pair of jaws by a central portion, said handle including a moveable trigger connected to said at least first pair of jaws, whereby movement of said trigger is operative to selectively position said at least first pair of jaws between the unclamped position and a fully closed position thereof, and a locking mechanism operative to selectively lock said at least first pair of jaws in the at least first clamped position thereof, said locking mechanism comprising:

(a) a lock lever including a cam surface, the lock lever selectively moveable between a first position, wherein the lock lever is engaged with the trigger to limit movement thereof, and a second position, wherein the lock lever is disengaged from the trigger to permit unlimited movement thereof, and wherein further the lock lever is biased to the first position thereof; and

(b) a manually operable switch having a cam following portion which, by selective movement of the switch, is positionable along the cam surface of the lock lever to effect movement of the lock lever between the first and second positions thereof.

2. The device of claim 1, further comprising a series of notches provided on one of the lock lever or trigger and a corresponding tab provided on the other of said lock lever or trigger, wherein said notches and tab cooperate when the lock lever is in said first position.

3. The device of claim 2, wherein the trigger and the at least first pair of jaws are connected by a resilient linking member.

4. The device of claim 3, wherein said resilient linking member comprises a rod having a spring section provided along the length thereof.

5. The device of claim 1, wherein the at least first pair of jaws are selectively rotatable relative to a longitudinal axis of the device defined between the handle and the at least first pair of jaws.

6. The device of claim 5, wherein the central portion terminates in a seating surface, and the at least first pair of jaws include an opposing end surface which is seatable upon the seating surface of the central portion, and wherein the at least first pair of jaws are rotatable relative to the seating surface of the central portion, and wherein further the seating surface of the central portion and the opposing end surface of the at least first pair of jaws include one or the other of complementary tab and recess portions, the complementary tab and recess portions engageable to define at least a first rotational position of the at least first pair of jaws relative to the longitudinal axis of the device.

7. The device of claim 6, further comprising a plurality of the complementary tab and recess portions radially spaced about the end surface of the at least first pair of jaws and the seating surface of the central portion to thereby define a plurality of rotational positions of the at least first pair of jaws relative to the longitudinal axis of the device.

8. The device of claim 1, wherein each of the at least first pair of jaws includes a gripping portion removably connected thereto.

9. The device of claim 8, wherein each gripping portion comprises an upper part having opposite gripping and seating surfaces, and a stem part extending axially from the upper part, the stem part including at least one radially extending tab, and wherein further each of the at least first pair of jaws includes a blind bore dimensioned to receive therein the stem part, including the tab, the bore opening adjacent an upper surface opposing the seating surface of the gripping portion upper part, and the bore further communicating with a radiused slot dimensioned to receive therein the tab of the stem part to thereby permit rotational movement of the gripping portion relative to the jaw.

10. The device of claim 9, wherein the seating surface of each gripping portion includes at least one detent, and the upper surface of each of the at least first pair of jaws includes a complementary recess positioned at the limit of rotational movement of the gripping portion relative to the jaw.

11. The device of claim 1, wherein the trigger includes a stop portion, and the handle includes an opposing surface against which the stop portion abuts to define a limit to the range of motion of the trigger in a first direction.

12. The device of claim 11, wherein the trigger further includes at least a first recess defined below the stop portion, the at least first recessed area dimensioned to accommodate the index finger of a user.